

Make your Résumé "Pop"

By Nancy Ross

As an executive coach, I'm often asked by clients how to craft an attention-getting résumé. The résumé is an often-overlooked tool for those seeking their next job within, as well as outside the company. Don't assume because you've known the hiring manager for years that he knows your background and capabilities. A punchy, easy-to-read résumé is key to letting others know where you shine. Use your résumé to quickly highlight for your new boss and your boss's boss the unique skills and results that you will bring to their team. Here's how:

1. Describe **RESULTS**, not responsibilities. Don't say "Responsible for quality assurance." Instead, say "Reduced customer-reported errors by 75% during first 3 months leading QA team." Doesn't that make you want to know more?
2. **QUANTIFY** your results. (See #1) Include concrete, clear quantification of results in terms of revenue, budget, profit, employee productivity, schedules, and customer satisfaction.
3. **DON'T BE BORING.** Make your résumé brief, to-the-point and attention-grabbing. Say just enough to make your reader want to ask you to tell them more.
4. **GRAB YOUR READER'S ATTENTION** in the top 3 inches of the first page. Assume each of your readers has a short attention span. I assure you we all do, when reading résumés.
5. Make your résumé **TWO PAGES MAX** in length. I know you have lots of interesting experience from 15 years ago. Summarize or drop your earliest experience.
6. Use **WHITE SPACE.** It's hard to read anything, especially on a computer screen, without enough white space.
7. Use **BULLET LISTS.** On a résumé, it's boring to read paragraphs, and you'll lose the reader's attention.
8. Use **ACTION VERBS.** Do a web search for "résumé action verbs", and use them. Abolish "I was responsible for...."--nothing will put your reader to sleep faster. Instead, try "Created....Negotiated....Increased" and other verbs that create a mental picture for your reader.
9. Choose an attractive **FONT.** My favorites are Arial and Verdana--both look crisp and modern, and are easy on the eyes. Use **BOLD** type selectively to draw your reader's attention.
10. **BANISH TYPOS and GRAMMATICAL ERRORS!** This cannot be over-emphasized. Typos and grammatical errors make you look careless or even unintelligent. Get a hyper-picky friend to point out errors before you go public.

Make these 10 easy changes to your résumé, and you'll immediately jump ahead of the competition. Once you find that your résumé no longer bores **YOU**, you'll be well on your way to getting a call-back from the hiring manager.